

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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FAA BRUSSELS

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LONDON FOR RAY SEITZ AND AMBASSADOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN, EAIR, CASC, PINS, NI

SUBJECT: CESSNA AIRCRAFT AND PILOTS DETAINED
IN NIGERIA.

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REFS: A) STATE 194161, B) LAGOS 9026, C) LAGOS 9155

1. AS NOTED REF A, DEPARTMENT REQUIRES FREQUENT UPDATES ON STATUS OF THE THREE CESSNA AIRCRAFT IMPOUNDED IN UGHELLI AND THE THREE PILOTS DETAINED IN BENIN CITY. PLEASE REPORT IMMEDIATELY ON RESULTS OF MEETING ZAIRIAN EMBASSY IS REPORTED TO HAVE HAD WITH FMG AUGUST 5, BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION ATTEMPTS TO SEE THE PILOTS AUGUST 7, AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS.

2. THE THREE PLANES AT UGHELLI ARE PART OF AN FMS ORDER FOR 12 PLACED WITH CESSNA BY THE ZAIRE AIR FORCE. UNTIL THEY ARE DELIVERED TO ZAIRE THEY REMAIN THE PROPERTY OF CESSNA. AS YOU ARE AWARE, THEY HAVE US REGISTRATION. THESE AIRCRAFT (CESSNA 150) ARE THE SMALLEST TYPE OF PLANES MADE BY CESSNA AND ARE USUALLY USED FOR TRAINING OR LIGHT CIVILIAN PURPOSES. CESSNA SENT THE AIRCRAFT DISASSEMBLED, FROM ITS PLANT IN WICHITA TO ITS PLANT IN FRANCE FOR ASSEMBLY AND DELIVERY BY PILOTS UNDER TEMPORARY CONTRACT TO CESSNA. FOUR OF THE 12 REMAINING PLANES ARE READY TO LEAVE FRANCE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE. THE MOST ECONOMIC AND PRACTICAL ROUTE FROM FRANCE TO ZAIRE IS THAT FOLLOWED BY THE THREE PLANES NOW AT UGHELLI. THUS, CESSNA HOPES IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO OVERFLY AND LAND IN NIGERIA IN MAKING SUBSEQUENT DELIVERIES.

3. THE US INTERESTS IN THIS CASE ARE TO SECURE THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THE THREE AIRCRAFT NOW AT UGHELLI AND TO CREATE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH SUBSEQUENT OVER-FLIGHT AND LANDINGS WILL BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT ENCOUNTERING SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES. UNLESS YOU BELIEVE THAT INVOLVEMENT BY THE EMBASSY IN THIS CASE WOULD IMPAIR THE ATTAINMENT OF THESE OBJECTIVES, YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING FACT OF US OWNERSHIP OF THESE AIRCRAFT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES, TO REQUEST THE RELEASE OF THE PLANES, AND TO COORDINATE YOUR ACTIONS WITH THE BRITISH, FRANCH AND ZAIRIAN EFFORTS TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF PILOTS AND AIRCRAFT.

4. FYI - CESSNA HAS BEEN RECEIVING REPORTS FROM WING COMMANDER COBB DIRECTLY AND VIA HIS WIFE IN UK. HE AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE TWO OTHER PILOTS ARE NOW APPARENTLY HOUSED IN SUB-STANDARD BUILDING ADJACENT TO BENIN CITY POLICE STATION. THEIR MORALE IS VERY LOW. ACCORDING CESSNA, ZAIRE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS AT LAST INFORMED THE NIGERIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON THAT THE PLANES ARE BEING DELIVERED TO THE ZAIRE AIR FORCE. END FYI

5. FOR FAA/CIVAIR: FAA AIRMEN RECORDS BRANCH HAS

PROVIDED FOLLOWING DATA ON FOREIGN PILOTS MENTIONED
REF C:

A) BRITISH CIT COBB. NO RECORD OF ANY FAA PILOT
CERTIFICATE.

B) BRITISH CIT LAUGHTON. FAA COMMERCIAL CERTIFICATE
NO. 2255627, ISSUED MARCH 10, 1976. RATING AIRPLANE,
SINGLE-ENGINE, LAND; HELICOPTER; INSTRUMENT AIRPLANE.

C) FRENCH CIT DESPRES. FAA COMMERCIAL CERTIFICATE
NO. 1955649, ISSUED OCT 21, 1975. RATING AIRPLANE, SINGLE
/MULTI-ENGINE LAND; INSTRUMENT AIRPLANE. ADDRESS: VILLA
SERENA BLVD, BELLOTTRUD, CABRIS 06530 FRANCE.

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